

Support of Independent Living Centers, WHY they Should Be Part of
The Governor's Biennial Budget!

Hello, my name is Fred Frank. If the name is familiar to anyone, it is because I have been an advocate for People with Disabilities and I have worked for a better existence for People with Disabilities for over forty (40) years. I started my advocacy working for the Disability Resource Center of Fairfield County as a Community Organizer. Our Center shows consumers how to do things for themselves and how to function in the community without expensive programs that they would otherwise depend up on. It didn't take long for me to realize that teaching and empowering People with Disabilities to function on their own is less costly to the State.

For several years I was vice-president of the CT. Association of Centers for Independent Living (CACIL). For the past two (2) years I have been affiliated with the Center for Disability Rights in West Haven, CT. How do I know that Independent Living Centers work? I was riding down an elevator one afternoon and a man next to me said, "Aren't you Fred Frank?" I said, "Yes." Then that man said to me that he wanted to shake my hand because I assisted his disabled son to obtain employment. I have many stories like

this one that illustrate the superior efforts of the Independent Living Centers. This is a reflection of all Independent Living Centers in the state. There are five centers throughout the state that provide information and referral, advocacy, skills training, peer support, community inclusion, barrier removal, empowerment, and a host of other possibilities' for People with Disabilities.

When Dannell Malloy was elected Governor, I believed that People with Disabilities had a champion on their side and now the playing field would be level. Apparently, it is not that simple. If funding for Independent Living Centers is eliminated, and the staff are not in place to do the valuable work they do; then we won't be hearing any more stories of success like the one the gentleman on the elevator related.

It would be a foolish and costly mistake, to the State and to the citizens of Connecticut to eliminate Independent Living Centers from the governor's budget. Please pause and take a serious second look at this cut, restore it, and give People with Disabilities some meaningful hope.

Thank you,

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